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General Assembly

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Official Records

81st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 12 February 2008, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Thematic debate entitled "Addressing climate change: The United Nations and the world at work"

Agenda items 48, 54 and 116 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Sustainable development

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/644)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Morocco, His Excellency Mr. Abdelkbir Zahoud, State Secretary in charge of Water and the Environment.

Mr. Zahoud (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco and on my own behalf, I would like, at the outset, to warmly thank the President of the General Assembly for having invited us to participate in this high-level thematic debate on climate change. The invitation to this debate two months after the Conference of the Parties in Bali reaffirms the will and determination of the General Assembly to participate in activating the Bali Road Map. The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reveals that these climate changes are now part of our daily landscape. The increasing frequency of certain climate and meteorological phenomena, especially droughts and floods, is of particular concern.

The effects of climate change are of concern to the international community, and in particular to the African continent, which has experienced the most detrimental consequences. This should be the focus of particular attention in order to draw up realistic adaptation plans, while assessing the capacities of countries, ensuring exchanges of technology and providing the financial resources necessary to combat climate change.

We believe that adaptation requires information and awareness programmes, and economic mechanisms to enable our countries to effectively manage climate change in order to meet the challenge posed by phenomena such as floods and drought and by other possible crises. Among measures to help African countries overcome these obstacles are the following. The first is the establishment of observation and early warning systems to monitor climate developments on a daily, monthly, seasonal and long-range basis, so as to strengthen early action capacities. Secondly, we must put in place well-adapted socio-economic methods and machinery, particularly in the fields of agriculture, energy and water resources. Thirdly, steps should be taken to protect natural resources and avoid shortages by adopting a policy of conservation and rationalization of our natural resources, combating pollution, and seeking new sources of energy,

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consistent with the requirements of sustainable development.

The following are some of the objectives we and other African countries have set for ourselves in the field of adaptation and mitigation, on which we need the support of the United Nations. Adaptation to climate change requires additional financial resources, which places a burden on ecologically fragile countries such as Morocco. Such countries can develop national programmes in the fields of forestation, combating desertification and the development of renewable energy resources and can give priority to efficient energy sources. We have to strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, particularly its provisions dealing with adaptation and mitigation. At the same time, we have to be aware of the international and institutional balances that need to be struck to mitigate climate change.

We call on United Nations institutions and organs to give priority to programmes and projects that can help to offset the effects of climate change. We also call on other relevant parties to engage in monitoring, observation, and prediction activities, and to draw up strategies for prevention, while improving the effectiveness of adaptation and mitigation methods. The entire international community should participate in this effort. Furthermore, concerted efforts must be made to provide developing countries with the necessary financial resources so that they can benefit as much as possible from what is currently being done internationally, particularly by the United Nations.

The United Nations can play a very positive role in transferring clean technology and intellectual property systems to the countries of the South, through practical measures that would enable them to effect sustainable development in line with Millennium Development Goals. The multi-party fund set up in this connection for the benefit of developing countries is a positive step. Optimal use should also be made of existing mechanisms, and exchanges of experience should be enhanced so that developing countries can take full advantage of such exchanges.

As far as financing and the mobilization of resources is concerned, the United Nations has been making considerable efforts to meet development needs and has designed effective programmes for that purpose. Climate change have become an international problem, and it is thus up to us all to build stronger solidarity in order to preserve our world for future generations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jan Dusik, Deputy Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Dusik (Czech Republic): Let me express my deep appreciation to the President of the General Assembly, Srgjan Kerim, for the opportunity to contribute to this important debate addressing the worldwide issue of climate change.

The Czech Republic, sharing as it does the European Union (EU) commitment to climate change mitigation, fully supports the statement made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

The Bali Conference demonstrated that cooperation, partnership and dialogue are crucial aspects in tackling climate change. The Bali Action Plan and its important building blocks — shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financial flows — were successfully agreed upon. Furthermore, the time frame for completion of an agreement for the post-2012 period was set. All of those partial steps towards a final agreement are necessary in the whole overall process of finding a solution to this complex topic. As Bali showed, future agreement on the post-Kyoto regime is very challenging, but can nevertheless be reached in 2009 in Copenhagen.

The Czech Republic is ready to take an active part in the forthcoming international negotiations, as a EU member State and as one of the countries holding the EU presidency during the decisive negotiation period. We expect that all of the main building blocks will be deliberated upon and will be covered by the post-2012 agreement.

In the mitigation area, the important specific evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) should be reflected, and information should be promoted in order to ensure fair sharing of mitigation efforts in the Copenhagen agreement. The role of the carbon market as a main mitigation and financial tool ought to be enhanced. A lot of work needs to be done in preparation and implementation of adaptation policies and measures, especially in the small island developing States and least developed

countries, which are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Enhanced action on technology development and transfer in order to support action on mitigation and adaptation is crucial. In this context, all financial instruments established under the Convention should be made operational as soon as possible.

The Czech Republic supports the efforts of the United Nations and calls for the strengthening of the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the only forum where legally binding decisions are taken. We recognize the importance of the whole United Nations system. At the global, regional and national levels, many United Nations organizations are currently undertaking climate change activities such as monitoring, scientific research, reporting, capacity-building, technology transfer and financing.

Furthermore, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should set combating climate change as one of the priorities within the medium-term strategy 2010-2013. It devoted the tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council to a thematic discussion on mobilizing finance to meet the climate challenge. However, we are of the view that in order to ensure complementarity rather than duplication in United Nations activities, the development of an effective framework for greater coherence and coordination of the work of the United Nations system is needed.

Let me recall that many of the UNFCCC parties are also parties to other global multilateral environmental agreements, such as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol.

The promotion of a synergistic approach to the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, as well as to the facilitation of activities undertaken by the relevant secretariats, could be seen as a new challenge for the United Nations system, needed for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Czech Republic fully subscribes to the Millennium Development Goals and is prepared to contribute towards their achievement within its capacities by multiple means and in line with its strategy for Czech development assistance.

International cooperation is required to put ourselves on a path to slow, stop and reverse the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. Donor and recipient countries and institutions should follow an integrated approach and promote synergies among all financial instruments in order to secure the most efficient implementation of the effort to combat climate change.

We strongly believe that coordinated actions at the United Nations level will promote more coherent and systematic work at the national level. Those both together are the preconditions for our common goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the negative impacts of climate change.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. El-Sayed Ramzi Ezz el-Dein Ramzi, Assistant Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs and International Cooperation of Egypt.

Mr. Ramzi (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure at the outset to extend my thanks and greetings to the President of the General Assembly and to the Secretary-General for the great attention they have focused on the issue of sustainable development, including, inter alia, the question of climate change, which has become the top priority on the international agenda. That has been reflected in the convening of the high-level meeting on climate change in September 2007 and of the current meeting to discuss the role that could be played by the United Nations system pursuant to the mandates assigned to it by Member States, including support for partnerships between Governments and the private sector.

Our position is based on our conviction of the seriousness of the issue. Egypt — particularly its delta, its Mediterranean coast, and the city of Alexandria — represents one of the most vulnerable countries threatened by climate change, which is borne out by scientific evidence, in particular the outcome of the fourth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

We also believe that the outcome of the Bali Conference and its aftermath should be studied carefully, particularly the reference to the voluntary responsibility of all developing countries in mitigation, which has added a new dimension to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In that context, I should like to reiterate the statement made by the Egyptian delegation at the

closing meeting in Bali to the effect that our interpretation of such responsibilities should be understood in the context of the fact that there are different levels of development within the developing countries. We therefore call for the inclusion of the criterion of income level and growth in the issue of climate change with its two dimensions, mitigation and adaptation.

From a conceptual point of view, we believe it is useful to address the ongoing negotiations under the Framework Convention on the basis of its two main areas — adaptation and mitigation — in terms of criteria and impact, as well as both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions in an equal and balanced way. For example, the quantitative dimension in the mitigation area is reflected in the volume of emissions, whereas adaptation is reflected in the size of the population affected by climate change and the extent of damage to a country. On the other hand, the qualitative dimension in mitigation is seen in the type of emissions, the means of reducing them, and the mechanisms able to furnish alternatives to fossil fuels, such as new and renewable energy, the role of clean technology, and the funding needed in light of private sector ownership. In mitigation, however, the qualitative aspect is reflected in vulnerability and its impact.

In that context, I would like to echo once again the statement made by the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, at the high-level event in September 2007, in which he called for the submission of a list of the most vulnerable countries affected by climate change. We have been pleased to learn that the United Nations is convening a meeting to discuss that issue this year and that the proposal was reiterated by the island States in Bali later in 2007. In addition to the foregoing, we call for attention to be focused on countries with deltas threatened by inundation by sea and ocean water in view of the urgency and grave potential impact of that phenomenon on the populations and development of those countries.

That brings us to the content of the documents and rationale of the current meeting, which address international cooperation, priorities, the role of the United Nations, and partnership between Governments and the private sector. It is obvious that technology is one of the most important mechanisms for solving that problem, either through clean technology to reduce emissions or by addressing the consequences of the phenomenon in the context of sustainable development in relation to such issues as water resources, agriculture and others.

It is noted that the United Nations, pursuant to its mandate and as a system that covers all aspects of assistance to Member States in addressing the phenomenon — such as the formulation of plans and the adoption of capacity-building measures — remains idle with respect to mechanisms in the areas of finance and technology transfer, which are still in the hands of the private sector or in forums not bound by United Nations resolutions, in particular the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility and the Adaptation Fund recently established under the UNFCCC. The situation will not allow the system to play an effective and distinct role so long as the status quo is in effect.

We stress our support for partnerships between Governments and all stakeholders in that area, given the importance of that role as a complement of and not a replacement for international cooperation.

We believe in the usefulness and effectiveness of the regional dimension of cooperation. We therefore propose the establishment of mechanisms for financing, including regional funds for adaptation, as well as for technology transfer on a preferential basis, particularly for the most vulnerable countries.

It is important to emphasize a number of principles enshrined in international law and international cooperation in general. Those principles include no harm to others in the implementation of projects or plans at the national and regional levels in the areas of mitigation and adaptation; respect for the concept of State sovereignty, in view of the emergence of the security dimension of climate change; the need to pay equal attention to the nine priorities enshrined in the Framework Convention in the area of adaptation; and the need for attention to the economic dimension of the current trends aimed at cultivating vast areas with grain for the use of biofuels, which contribute to rising grain prices globally. While we support the growing role of the United Nations system in addressing climate change, we caution against the danger of neglecting the roles assigned to it in other areas that make the United Nations a comprehensive forum for multilateral cooperation.

I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his preliminary report, which contains an overview of the activities of United Nations entities on climate

change. We look forward to receiving it in its final form so that Member States can consider its content and determine their position accordingly.

Finally, I would also like to emphasize that the UNFCCC is the only forum for negotiations and that Member States have agreed to mandate it to address the issue before us in all its dimensions. I would also like to emphasize the value of coordination within the United Nations system in that respect in order to avoid repetition, duplication and a waste of resources.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Howard Bamsey, Deputy Secretary of Environment of Australia.

Mr. Bamsey (Australia): On behalf of the Australian Government, I am very pleased to be able to participate in this important debate. In that context, I acknowledge the significance of the statement to be made later today by the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Group of Small Island Developing States, which are among the most vulnerable to climate change.

We are here today because we recognize that climate change is a serious global problem that demands a determined global response. Events such as today's are instrumental in maintaining and strengthening the political momentum and public commitment crucial for responding to the significant challenges posed by climate change. I therefore take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly for his timely initiative.

Just two months ago in Bali, we, the community of nations, demonstrated our strong will to work together to meet those challenges across four broad areas for action. The United Nations system is central to delivering on that mandate. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is and will remain the overarching framework that guides our collective climate change response and within which we will reach a comprehensive agreement next year. But beyond the negotiations, we must also recognize that action at all levels, in all regions and across all sectors and communities is necessary to ensure that our global efforts are successful. That is true also across all parts of the United Nations system.

Notwithstanding the respective mandates and diverse areas of expertise across the United Nations, Australia sees real opportunities for ensuring a more cohesive, system-wide response to climate change in the future. An efficient and effective United Nations response, delivered in collaboration with Member States, the private sector and civil society, is fundamental for implementing existing commitments and delivering on all future agreements.

As confirmed by the Secretary-General's overview provided as background for this debate, the United Nations system is already playing a vital role in leveraging increased investment and financial flows for adaptation and mitigation actions, and in supporting the wide-scale diffusion of low-emission technologies. We must ensure that practical, on-the-ground support provided through the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant agencies — in particular support to least developed countries — is well coordinated and does not duplicate efforts or lead to wasted resources. It is imperative that available funding and support be properly targeted and utilized in a manner that maximizes the sustainable development benefits for the regions, countries and local communities in question.

The efforts of national Governments and support from United Nations agencies, while critical, will not be sufficient to meet the challenges at hand. Action by and in collaboration with the private sector, local communities and non-governmental organizations has become an important tool in the fight against climate change, and there are increasingly positive signs that all stakeholders are responding to the challenge.

We have recently seen an explosive proliferation of partnerships in the climate space, including Government with Government, public with private and industry with industry. That phenomenon was confirmed by the sheer number and diversity of those attending Bali and announcing collaborative action, from Government and business to non-governmental and community organizations.

In Australia's experience, the most effective partnerships are likely to be those that are informal and flexible and that facilitate quick action and responsiveness to changing circumstances. At their best, such partnerships can deliver innovation in technology, develop markets for new products and services, and encourage the sharing of knowledge and best practices. For example, in Australia, we have developed innovative new partnerships based on the

designation of "solar cities", often bringing together disparate partners for the first time, to considerable advantage.

Partnerships can allow new approaches to be trialled, mistakes to be made and learned from, and ideas to be cultivated and then, as they mature, brought to larger forums for wider application. We see such partnerships as potentially beneficial in a number of climate-related sectors, for example, in trialling approaches to address deforestation and land degradation, including how such efforts might be supported by market mechanisms.

Among neighbours and friends, partnerships expand understanding and deepen existing relationships. Among countries challenged by climate change, partnerships can foster a collegiate atmosphere that builds cooperation and, crucially, confidence beyond the boundaries of formal diplomacy. Between Governments and business, partnerships can lay the foundation for exciting new enterprises and the development of new and clean technologies. All partners bring with them expertise and take with them a share of the profits of the relationship — capacity, technology, experience and, most importantly, the confidence to act.

The Australian Government and Australian industries are participating actively in a range of international partnerships, including with many countries represented here. We welcome the discussions at this forum about how our collective efforts can support, complement and build on the solid base of action and partnerships already under way.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Vittorio Craxi, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy.

Mr. Craxi (Italy) (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by endorsing the statement delivered by the Slovenian presidency on behalf of the European Union.

Allow me also to thank President Kerim for promoting today's event, which rightly highlights the role of the General Assembly as the supreme representative body of the international community in the fight against climate change. The action of personal advocacy being conducted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is, I believe, extremely important in helping to accelerate negotiations and in mainstreaming climate issues in the United Nations system.

We have now moved from the important phase of public awareness and scientific analysis of the risks being run by the planet to the urgent phase of defining and adopting common regulations, policies and instruments inspired by the principles of efficiency and worldwide solidarity.

The United Nations should be the primary forum for achieving that goal. All the national and regional forums equipped to finding common ground for appropriate policies have a useful contribution to make, but the central position of the United Nations as the multilateral seat for defining the future regime of emissions reduction should be preserved and, indeed, strengthened.

The recent meeting of the United Nations Chief Executives Board and the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations climate change activities are, in my opinion, steps in the right direction. The climate change issue can represent a best practice for coordination within the United Nations system along the lines that we all embrace, under the formula "deliver as one".

Italy believes in the importance of concretely involving the international financial institutions in programmes to fight climate change. Their participation should be targeted mainly at expanding the opportunities offered by appropriate policies to safeguard the environment and the climate as a driver of sustainable development.

The collective response to the challenges of climate change should be strengthened, according to Italy and the European Union, with particular reference to the governance of the environment. The idea at the heart of our assessments is that the environmental sector should be equipped with a forum with a solid scientific and financial footing that would mobilize international momentum and provide political leadership.

Italy also feels that the function performed by the Commission on Sustainable Development is crucial. Together with the General Assembly, it represents the main vehicle for promoting sustainable development policies in their various components. Within the European Union, my country has promoted ideas on how to strengthen the Commission.

With respect to the second theme of today's debate, I wish to recall that Italy has financed a study

of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of sustainable development partnerships, which represent a fundamental complement to traditional governmental approaches to environmental protection. Moreover, partnership has an important role in mobilizing financial resources from various sources and in promoting the spread of technologies and the sharing of experiences between Governments, universities, businesses and environmental non-governmental organizations. The partnerships initiated by Italy include, for example, the Mediterranean Renewable Energy Partnership project, which aims to provide modern energy services and to help mitigate climate change by developing a larger share of renewable sources in the energy mix of the Mediterranean region.

Many local Italian administrations stand out as examples of excellence in the field of sustainable development. We can cite the Rome for Kyoto programme, as well as the city of Milan — represented here yesterday by its mayor — which has prioritized the environmental issue in proposing its candidature for the Universal Exposition of 2015 under the theme "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life".

A critical role is played by business, which is a key actor for achieving the objectives set by the international community in that area. Businesses, however, need a clear regulatory framework to be able to make their full contribution. It is therefore up to Governments, in the context of the United Nations, to establish the rules. In that framework, flexible mechanisms, such as those provided for by the Kyoto Protocol, contribute to spreading new technologies in developing countries, fostering both the internationalization of businesses and the promotion of sustainable development. Those instruments should thus be strengthened with a more equitable geographic distribution of the same through incentives and capacity-building activities in favour of the most vulnerable countries.

In conclusion, we face a global threat that makes no distinction between different countries or different levels of affluence. Either we win this challenge all together or suffer together the grave consequences, moral and otherwise, for future generations if we do not address the question appropriately at the political, social, economic and technological levels. Our reflections over the past two days have been accompanied — I am convinced — by a sense of shared responsibility and a concrete, consistent commitment.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nikola Ruzinski, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction of Croatia.

Mr. Ruzinski (Croatia): Global warming is an unquestionable fact, as concluded by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The impact of climate change affects us all, and that is a common understanding today.

As the first generation facing the serious consequences of climate change, we all have an obligation to confront those consequences in order to mitigate the damage done, as well as to prevent future harmful impacts. Croatia firmly believes that fighting climate change demands urgent international efforts by developed and developing countries alike. The recently adopted Bali Road Map and Action Plan provide the framework for the formal negotiations to reach a comprehensive and strong international climate change agreement for the period beyond 2012. That action should be based on equity and in accordance with common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Croatia is ready to participate actively in the post-Kyoto process.

In facing today's climate change challenges, we are of the opinion that fulfilling commitments at the national level is crucial, but also needs to be supplemented by cooperation and synergy at the international level.

Croatia has developed a national climate change strategy and action plan that establish the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 5 per cent, relative to 1990, in the period 2008-2012. The strategy's goals are planned to be incorporated into all sectoral policies, taking into consideration the cost-effectiveness of the reduction measures.

The main categories of mitigation include the promotion and increased usage of renewable energy sources and alternative fuels; improvement of energy efficiency in energy production, supply and consumption; and reduction measures in industrial processes and waste management. Increasing attention is being paid to education and raising public awareness. In order to effectively address climate

change mitigation issues, we are also revising our national energy strategy.

The reductions required to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to a level that will not endanger the climate system cannot be achieved with the currently applied measures and procedures. What is required is the enhanced use of new, advanced technologies and additional investments in future low-carbon technologies supporting sustainable development. The vulnerability of the situation, due to the unpredictability of the climate itself and the increasing frequency of extreme atmospheric conditions throughout the planet, requires further scientific research to that end.

Climate change in our part of the world might affect the Adriatic sea level, change the hydrological situation, and in turn jeopardize the main branches of the Croatian economy — tourism and agriculture. It could also have a significant effect on forests, biological diversity and ecosystems. Therefore, our next step is the preparation of an impact, vulnerability and adaptation strategy, to be followed by the definition of measures to be taken in all relevant sectors in order to mitigate and adapt to the expected harmful effects.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tran The Ngoc, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Viet Nam.

Mr. Tran The Ngoc (Viet Nam): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and wishes to highlight some issues of concern to us.

Climate change has become one of mankind's greatest and most pressing challenges in recent decades. The phenomenon has been rooted mainly in human activities since the beginning of the industrial revolution more than 200 years ago. Adverse effects of climate change, including sea-level rise, the shift of weather patterns and an increase in the frequency and scale of natural hazards are generally threatening the sustainable development of all countries throughout the world. Climate change has no definable boundaries. Therefore, international cooperation to deal with that global phenomenon is more necessary and critical than ever to avoid a serious disruption of global and national economic and social activities.

It is the developing countries and the poorest parts of the world that suffer the most from the adverse effects of climate change. Among those, Viet Nam has been listed among the top five most seriously affected countries. International experts have estimated that as many as 22 million Vietnamese, especially those living in the central and southern regions, will be displaced if the sea level rises by one additional metre. In fact, Viet Nam is already suffering from climate change.

There is scientific evidence provided in the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as well as in the Human Development Report, that we can afford to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, stabilize carbon dioxide levels and limit global warming. To achieve that requirement, we need first and foremost a clear and agreed road map for the post-2012 period in which the interests of poor countries and communities are of primary concern. It is our hope that a new agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will be developed in that regard, and we confirm our continued strong support for the general principles and differentiated responsibilities.

Presently, adaptation to climate change has become an essential concern for all of us and should be addressed in the framework agreement, with emissions reduction as the central issue. In contribution to the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC to reduce the negative impacts of climate change, aimed at sustainable development, the Government of Viet Nam recently adopted the important decision to establish an action plan to implement the Kyoto Protocol for the period 2007-2010. It will serve as the main framework for the management and coordination of climate change activities in Viet Nam towards achieving the strategic objective of sustainable development. In addition, a national target programme to cope with climate change is being developed in our country.

As one of several countries seriously affected by climate change, Viet Nam has been actively working with the international community to reach multilateral agreements to address climate change impacts. That global concern requires a global solution. We now look forward to joining the efforts undertaken by the international community to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention, as well as global sustainable development.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rezaul Kabir, Secretary of Environment and Forests of Bangladesh.

Mr. Kabir (Bangladesh): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the least developed countries. We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The group of least developed countries commends President Kerim for convening this thematic debate, which has special significance as we embark on the negotiations for a global agreement under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action. We are confident that, under his able leadership, our deliberations will be steered to meaningful conclusions.

We consider the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to be the central multilateral structure within which the negotiations on climate change should take place. We believe that the thematic debate will contribute to generating significant political momentum that can support the ongoing negotiations under the UNFCCC. The thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC last December culminated in the adoption of the Bali Road Map.

The Road Map charts the course for a new negotiating process to be concluded by 2009. That will ultimately lead to a post-2012 international agreement on climate change. We should bear in mind that the agreement must be scientifically valid, environmentally sound, economically feasible and fair, particularly for the least developed countries, which are facing serious structural impediments. They do not have the necessary resources to meet the adaptation needs.

The Bali Action Plan has heightened our hope for a comprehensive global agreement by 2009. We must all work hard to complete the framework within the stipulated time frame. However, the most important issue for all of us is to agree on the stabilization target within the framework of the Bali Action Plan. We from the least developed countries — the most vulnerable countries — would certainly raise our voice in favour of the category-I stabilization scenarios established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in which emission peaking for carbon dioxide is in the range of 2000-2015, and with a global mean temperature increase above the pre-industrial equilibrium of 2.0 to 2.4 degrees Celsius. To achieve that, we have to reduce our emissions by 50 per cent, compared to our present emissions, by 2050. Failing to achieve that target would entail unbearable consequences for the developing countries, especially the most vulnerable least developed countries.

Climate change magnifies the possibility of increased extreme weather events, such as floods, cyclones, tornados, droughts and desertification. The report of the Secretary-General has very aptly recognized that the least developed countries are bearing the brunt of increased climate variability and unpredictable and severe weather events. That group of countries needs immediate international support to build their resilience to global warming and climate change.

Comprehensive adaptation can help many countries to minimize economic losses induced by natural disasters. The lack of adequate infrastructure often undermines a country's adaptation efforts. That in turn can make a disaster hugely and horrifically costly. The United Nations and the international community must be mindful of those linkages. International support for adaptation must take into account the infrastructural needs of affected countries, particularly in disaster management, agriculture, water resources and coastal zone management.

We have noted with concern that the resources mobilized under different international mechanisms for the purpose of adaptation are grossly inadequate. The lion's share of resources earmarked for climate change is now being deployed for the clean development mechanism (CDM). That leaves a meagre amount of resources for adaptation. The least developed countries are not getting CDM projects. We need to address that immediately.

The agreement on establishing the Adaptation Fund is a welcome initiative. However, the Adaptation Fund, which will be generated through a 2-per-cent levy from CDM sales proceeds, will fall short of the required level of funding needed to meet the developing countries' adaptation needs. According to a recent UNFCCC study, about $50 billion would be required annually for adaptation by 2030. The Fund must have adequate resources commensurate with the needs of the developing countries, in particular the least developed.

The post-2012 agreement should include precise commitments on servicing the adaptation needs and priorities of the least developed countries. Contributions should be legally binding in a measurable and verifiable manner. We also need to find innovative ways and means to generate the required fund. Mobilizing resources through levying international air travel and joint implementation and emissions trading can be considered to cover the cost of adaptation activities. The allocation of available resources needs to be based on the principle of equity and fairness, taking into account the level of vulnerability in specific countries.

Let me in that context draw attention to the recent initiative of the European Union, entitled "Building a global climate change alliance between the European Union and poor developing countries most vulnerable to climate change". We invite the United Nations to initiate similar cooperation for least developed countries by providing support through various United Nations agencies. However, the support should not merely deal with studies and assessments, which is usually the practice. It must go beyond that in terms of implementing projects and programmes. Support in terms of investment projects can reduce or dissipate the dangers of climate change impact.

Clean and appropriate technologies are crucial for both mitigation and adaptation. There should be renewed efforts to promote carbon-neutral economic growth. While technological solutions exist, we need to develop effective policy frameworks and cooperation instruments to accelerate the development, deployment and diffusion of those technologies. The fact remains that state-of-the-art technologies are developed in the richer countries. However, the current framework does not support the transfer, deployment and diffusion of technologies.

Preferential access to environmentally sound technologies, know-how, practices and processes pertinent to climate change is crucial for least developed countries. The international intellectual property regime needs to be revisited and, if needed, revised so that an enabling atmosphere for the smooth transfer of technology is established. The United Nations can play a catalytic role by providing a solid platform to facilitate technology transfer. It can provide technical support to developing countries in conducting technology needs assessment, as well as in transforming such assessments into bankable technology transfer projects. The United Nations can also undertake studies and provide policy recommendations on how the current intellectual property regime could be tailored towards the sustainable development needs of the developing countries.

The role of partnership in addressing climate change is significant. While building partnerships among countries is crucial, it is also important to forge partnerships within countries between the Government, the business community, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. The business community, which provides investment capital and undertakes technological innovation, can play a major role in support of Governments' efforts in addressing climate change. We are encouraged that business leaders, during the 2008 World Economic Forum in Davos, clearly proclaimed their willingness to step up to play a pivotal role in any solution to climate change. However, business cannot do that in isolation. The development and implementation of technological solutions require clear policy frameworks from Governments. Efforts to counter the effects of climate change require concerted engagement by all stakeholders.

The world is now more united than ever before in addressing the threats of climate change. I would urge the United Nations to take the lead in facilitating discussions between developed and developing countries for an agreement on the stabilization target and subsequent action plans to save our humanity from the dangerous and imminent consequences. If we fail to do so, humanity is destined to suffer.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Arturo Gonzalez Aizpiri, Secretary-General for Environment of Spain.

Mr. Gonzalez Aizpiri (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain wishes to align itself with the statement made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union. Allow me also to express the gratitude of the Spanish Government to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly for the commitment being demonstrated as the driving force for the multilateral response to climate change. We would like to reiterate our conviction that the United Nations system must enhance its coordination, resources and capacity to exert effective and worldwide leadership in that area.

Thanks to the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we all know that climate change is a global problem that demands a global response. All countries must contribute to ensuring that the rise of average global temperature is inferior to 2 degrees Celsius with respect to pre-industrial rates. New modes of cooperation must therefore be explored by focusing on medium- and long-range objectives that facilitate the participation of all countries.

To that end, the agreements reached in Bali give reason for hope. They mark an unprecedented milestone that represents the commitment of all Governments to undertake a global effort to implement urgent measures that may allow us to address the great threat of climate change.

However, if all countries are to play a role in the future regime of the campaign against climate change beyond 2012, the division of labour must be equitable. That means that all developed countries must back up their commitment with a greater contribution to the reduction of emissions and a greater cooperative effort in support of developing countries. The European Union is already committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent, reaching 30 per cent if a global, fair and effective agreement is reached by 2012. The European Commission recently presented the proposals of European Union norms that will enforce compliance with those commitments.

Fighting climate change requires an integrated perspective that takes both mitigation and adaptation into account. For Spain, that is a crucial issue — adaptation must urgently be given the same priority as mitigation in the global agenda. The future of many countries depends on it. In particular, we note the great impact of climate change on the availability of water resources. That is an issue that will be addressed at the International Exhibition on water and sustainable development to take place in Zaragoza next summer.

Developing countries are already disproportionately suffering the greatest changes, accentuating existing economic and social inequalities. It has become increasingly clear that climate change is asserting itself as a formidable enemy of global equity. It is therefore imperative to establish a multilateral regime whose architecture provides for adaptation activities throughout its structure, including special support for the most vulnerable countries.

We find ourselves facing a real ethical challenge in which industrialized countries bear a great responsibility. It is also absolutely necessary, however, that the entire United Nations system be adapted to that new reality, strengthening its internal coordination and introducing the fight against climate change to all areas of its strategic vision.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General, which is a useful reference document for this session. It is a useful analysis that adequately reflects the great potential of the United Nations system and outlines appropriate strategic orientations. The Government of Spain wishes to express its support, as well as its sense of urgency and conviction that we should be even more ambitious.

Undoubtedly, some changes at multiple levels will be needed to achieve the integration of climate change into all decision-making processes and in all sectoral policies, prioritizing the most vulnerable sectors or systems from both the social and the economic perspectives. In particular, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must play a critical role at the multilateral level.

The response to climate change will require vast and as yet untold resources. We urgently need an accurate analysis of the costs, as well as of the mechanisms and fluctuations of investment and financing that may be necessary, bearing in mind that development cooperation is a key element. In that context, Spain undoubtedly believes in global and sustainable development. Over the past three years, we have more than doubled our official development assistance. In 2008, we will reach 0.5 per cent of our gross domestic product, and 0.7 per cent by 2012, with a special focus on climate change.

In 2007, Spain contributed €100 million, to be deposited within the next five years, to the environment and climate change window of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Millennium Development Goals, and €2.8 million to the UNDP-United Nations Environment Programme initiative. Furthermore, the World Health Organization will receive €3 million from the Spanish Government for its new strategy on health and climate change, in addition to the €8 million already allocated to other programmes.

We believe that the Clean Development Mechanism is a key instrument because of its ability to

generate a low-carbon economy with benefits for local communities. The Spanish Government has already pledged a total investment of €305 million in that area.

In conclusion, the Government of Spain understands that the fights against climate change and poverty are the two faces of the great challenge of our generation. It is time to move from words to deeds, to be brave and generous, and to achieve an agreement in 2009 that meets the needs of the entire planet and, in particular, the poorest countries. We believe that this will not be possible without a stronger and more effective United Nations system. Spain will support that key role in the multilateral endeavour, advocating an equitable share of necessary efforts, and will assume the responsibility and solidarity that we stand for.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Theodore Skylakakis, Secretary-General for International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation of Greece.

Mr. Skylakakis (Greece): We congratulate the President of the General Assembly for organizing this important debate. Let me emphasize that Greece supports the statement made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

Climate change is one of the greatest and certainly most complex challenges that the international community is dealing with today and will have to address in the years to come. Climate change is already an environmental, social and economic reality, and most of its consequences within the next few decades will occur no matter what we decide to do today to mitigate the problem of emissions, not only because of the time lag between policy decisions and policy implementation, but also due to the time lag inherent to the phenomenon itself.

Our task is all the more difficult in that we need to find a global compromise that takes into consideration the various perspectives of all stakeholders; the different contributions to the problem made by developed, developing and least developed countries; the different historic emissions contributions of various countries; the different priorities and attitudes; the different economic, social and environmental impacts; and the different adaptation capacities. The compromise has to do all that and maintain, at the same time, the growth rates and the increase in development assistance and cooperation needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In Bali, a positive step was taken. We agreed to launch formal negotiations on a global agreement for the period after 2012 and to end those negotiations in 2009. How can we achieve that monumental task? Developed countries bear most of the responsibility. Fast-growing economies in the developing world, where most world development will occur in the next decades, have to do their part, and the rest of the developing world — especially the least developed countries and the small island States — has also to be actively involved in the negotiations. The least developed countries, lacking the capacity to deal with the negative effects of climate change, are and will be affected the worst, although they have played a minor role in the creation of the problem. Those countries can morally play a catalytic role towards the successful outcome of our negotiations.

Turning now to the specific vehicles that we can use, I would like to briefly refer to public-private partnerships, which can be a very useful tool for implementing our efforts to address climate change, especially in the areas of mitigation and technology transfer. Involving the private sector in that way permits us to share with it goals, resources, knowledge and expertise, while it greatly diminishes the political risks involved in the huge trillion-dollar investments that have to be made to move towards a carbon-free global economy. Those investments can be paid back only in the long run and thus need the reassurance of a stable political environment and of the contractual obligations of the States involved, created within the public-private partnership context.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations activities in relation to climate change. The United Nations system can and should play a pivotal role in addressing the challenge, but it is also crucial for Member States to do their share at both the domestic and the international levels.

For Greece's Government, environmental policy is central. We believe that growth and the environment can never be treated as two separate, unrelated fields. We have therefore revised our national programme for the reduction of greenhouse gases to ensure absolutely the achievement of our European Union and international obligations. Greece acts fully consistently with its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol, and the Government will further intensify its efforts, not just in compliance with Kyoto and European Union policies, but also because we consider it our moral obligation.

Renewable energy is also crucial for Greece, and to that end a special spatial planning law will help raise the production of alternative green energy to 20 per cent in 2010 and 30 per cent in 2020. Moreover, recycling has increased from 6 per cent of all waste to 24 per cent in the past three years.

As far as the efforts at the international level are concerned, we believe that the United Nations system, apart from its crucial role in achieving and implementing a new global agreement for the post-2012 period, should also continue to be actively involved in assisting Member States in the promotion of their climate change policies and the implementation of any relevant initiatives at the regional or international level.

Greece is active at that level, too. The current Greek chairmanship of the Human Security Network has adopted as its main priority the impact of climate change on human security and in particular on vulnerable population groups, such as women, children and people fleeing their homes due to climate change. Relevant policy papers and initiatives are being prepared in cooperation with UNICEF, the United Nations University, the International Organization for Migration and other international partners.

Our priority also has a regional dimension. We intend to concentrate on least developed countries and small island developing States, where significant resources should be committed to financing adaptation efforts. In that respect, and believing in the importance of enhancing regional cooperation on adaptation, we have already earmarked funds in order to finance adaptation projects in least developed countries and small island developing States in Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean, in cooperation with and through relevant regional organizations.

The challenge of climate change is the historic challenge of our generation. We must meet it working together, with common purpose and determination.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Teodora Obradovic Grnca Rovska, State Counsellor and National Coordinator on Climate Change of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Ms. Obradovic Grnca Rovska (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of Mr. Dzelil Bajrami, Minister of Environment and Physical Planning, who has unfortunately been prevented from doing so personally at this point in time.

At the outset, allow me to express thanks to the President of the General Assembly for convening this timely and important event. The challenge of addressing climate change effectively has been elevated to the forefront of the international community's agenda, transcending borders and nations and demanding coordinated, strong and urgent response.

We welcome the achievements of the last Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in Bali and the adoption of the landmark Bali Road Map, launching an inclusive negotiating process on a new global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement by the end of 2009 in Copenhagen. We find all four key building blocks of the Bali Action Plan equally important. We share the view that the United Nations provides the best setting to address that global threat as a matter of urgency, while yet in a comprehensive and coherent manner, in the context of sustainable development. We are fully aware that, in order to effectively address climate change risks and to act accordingly at all levels, strong commitment and the building of effective partnerships that would create synergy among all relevant national and international stakeholders — Governments, local authorities, the business community, the media, non-governmental organizations and so on — are of crucial importance. Capacity-building, increasing knowledge and raising awareness of the costs of non-action among all involved and relevant partners are also of key importance.

The Republic of Macedonia, as a candidate country for European Union (EU) membership, aligns itself with the statement of the EU presidency delivered this morning. Addressing climate change is one of the key driving forces of our national strategy for sustainable development. Furthermore, we recognize the merits of achieving sustainable development and advancing the transfer of technologies and knowledge through the implementation of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), thus contributing to the general commitment of the Government to attracting

investments, in this case manifested through environmental investments. The Government has established all necessary infrastructure to implement the CDM at the strategic, institutional, legislative and technical levels.

As a non-annex I country under the UNFCCC, we contribute towards the common goal of stabilizing the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases based on differential responsibilities, and we report on the steps taken at the national level to implement the Convention following the guidelines adopted by the Conference of Parties for non-annex I countries. Our second national communication on climate change is expected to be finalized by April 2008 and to be reported to the UNFCCC secretariat by September 2008. It is a strategic national document that will serve as a basis for comprehensive national action, including identifying and developing adaptation projects in the most vulnerable areas.

Of particular importance is the financing of enhanced mitigation and adaptation efforts, which require new and innovative concepts to cope with climate change in order to address potentially significant damage, particularly to agricultural production and food safety, increased water supply needs, human health risks, increased number of forest fires, and so on. If we are to achieve those goals, permanent sources of financing, both from the national budget and through bilateral and multilateral agreements, need to be provided. The Global Environment Facility, through its implementing agencies, should continue to assist the country in developing an integrated approach to climate change response measures and sustainable developing planning.

Let me conclude by expressing confidence that the fruitful discussion we have had in recent days has shown that, in order to cope successfully with the challenges of climate change, various partnerships have to be built to achieve our common goals. The Republic of Macedonia is ready to contribute to that end.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Fatima Raya Nasron, Deputy Secretary-General of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Malaysia.

Ms. Nasron (Malaysia): I would first like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on convening this very important meeting and, secondly, to associate Malaysia with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The complexity of the climate change challenge is such that no one can address it alone. Partnerships therefore need to be established. We are of the opinion that partnerships and cooperative ventures can best be facilitated by the following four measures.

First, there must be coordination among the relevant organizations so that synergy can be achieved. However, difficulties may arise, given the conflicting priorities of the many stakeholders involved. Secondly, environment ministries must be given significant roles and authority to promote coordination among stakeholders. Thirdly, Governments must use tax incentives to promote cooperative ventures with insurance companies and financial institutions that have an important role to play in managing risk and financing technology related to climate change. Fourthly and finally, the United Nations should design specific programmes to promote partnerships and cooperative ventures based on successful experiences for countries to emulate.

Malaysia continues to hold that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must form the core of measures to address climate change. On that basis, we believe that the following needs to be done as first steps if our aims are to be met.

Developed countries must assume their leadership role based on historical responsibility and technological and financial capacity, including the implementation of quantified targets and limitations. Developing countries should continue to implement sustainable development policies, supported and enabled by technology, financing and capacity-building. Mechanisms must be established to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and the implementation of pilot adaptation projects in developing countries. Obstacles to the transfer of technology and the provision of financial and other incentives to promote technology development and transfer should be removed. Funding of various types should be increased to developing countries in their development and implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions, as measures at the international level to address climate change must be made coherent, lest energies be dissipated and resources wasted.

Malaysia is of the view that adaptation must be considered as important as mitigation. That is due to the fact that climate change is already with us and that developing countries are bearing the brunt of its impact although they are least responsible for it. A plan is needed to ensure that funds are available to developing countries to cope with the diverse adverse effects of climate change on water supply, ecosystems, floods, coastal erosion and health.

We agreed in Bali to establish the Adaptation Fund. However, since the Fund is based only on a 2 per cent levy on the Clean Development Mechanism, we must work to ensure that it will be able to gain access to other sources of funding in order to stay viable in the long run.

As for mitigation, measures presently pursued by developing countries are mainly through the implementation of sustainable development policies. Actual projects carried out in line with those policies and measures can, with assistance from the United Nations system, be accelerated with technical knowledge, technology and financial assistance. That would enable them to move away from using fossil fuels to using renewable energy and to promote energy efficiency and the deployment of newer technologies like carbon capture and storage.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The climate change challenge can be met only if it is seen as an issue of development, rather than on its own. Further, it is not realistic to expect developing countries to give exclusive attention to climate change in their national priorities. Indeed, developing countries must grow economically in order to address climate change. Economic growth must take place alongside the environmental objective of reducing greenhouse gases and the social objectives of employment creation and poverty eradication. What developing countries require is the experience of those developed countries that have successfully decoupled their economic development from their carbon emissions. That is another facilitative role that the United Nations system can play.

The transfer of technology is closely tied to the role of the private sector and intellectual property rights. Unless some relaxation of intellectual property rights is allowed, such transfer may prove to be impossible because of the high costs involved. The United Nations system should explore the use of partnerships to make such transfers possible. Alternatively, the United Nations may help private sector organizations explore avenues for joint development of clean technology.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Malaysia's support for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, stressing at the same time the importance for annex I countries to fully implement their targets in the first commitment period. For its part, Malaysia will continue to address climate change within the context of sustainable development policies.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Youcef Yousfi, Permanent Representative of the delegation of Algeria.

Mr. Yousfi (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Arab Group, the delegation of Algeria would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this thematic debate on climate change, and extends its thanks to the Secretary-General for preparing the overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change (A/62/644). The Arab Group associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Arab Group welcomes initiatives, such as this debate, to discuss climate change, and also finds that the Secretary-General's report provides useful information on the activities of the United Nations system in the field of climate change. However, the Arab Group emphasizes that negotiations on that matter must remain in the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol as the primary mechanism for comprehensively addressing that phenomenon. The Arab Group stresses that this debate should remain in the context of exchanging views on how to further advance the implementation of the commitments contained in the Framework Convention and its mechanism.

The Group is of the view that this thematic debate and the documents before it should not overlap with or pre-empt the ongoing system-wide consultations on other issues. We must bear in mind that the system-wide coherence process relates to operational activities in developing countries, while the issue of climate change is of concern to all States, with the primary

responsibility to be shouldered by industrialized countries.

The Arab Group stresses the need to commit to the ultimate UNFCCC goal of stabilizing atmospheric greenhouse gases at a level that prevents damage to the climate system, within a time frame that allows ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, in order to ensure that food production is not endangered and that economic development is able to progress in a sustainable manner, and in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The Arab States, like all other developing countries, are vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change and their repercussions on development. Those vulnerabilities include, among other things, declining agricultural production and green cover, increased drought and desertification, the negative impact on biodiversity, the lack of food security and the threat to vital economic investments, in addition to the social and other negative consequences outlined by the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The Arab Group believes that dealing with the potential negative impacts of climate change requires international action and solidarity within the context of the goal of sustainable development with its three pillars — social development, economic development and environmental protection — based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. International action and cooperation must focus on supporting developing countries, which are the most vulnerable to climate change. Such action must also take into account the interests of developing countries that produce fossil fuels, including oil, whose economies will be adversely affected by measures to respond to climate change, and the interests of developing countries whose economies will be affected adversely by measures relating to the exploitation of forests.

The Arab Group emphasizes its commitment to the agreement reached by the States parties to the UNFCCC at their thirteenth Conference, which resulted in the Bali Action Plan and Road Map, as a framework for negotiations on post-2012 issues. It also emphasizes the need for technological and financial support and capacity-building measures to achieve sustainable development in developing countries.

The Arab States are working to include policies that address climate change issues at all levels in their national and regional sustainable development policies, consistent with sustainable economic growth and efforts to eradicate poverty. The Group is also working to adopt national and regional climate change action plans to assess possible impacts and to develop mitigation and adaptation programmes. It recognizes that mitigation programmes must focus on producing and using cleaner fuels, such as natural gas; improving energy efficiency in all sectors; diversifying energy sources, in accordance with the prevailing economic and social conditions; and expanding the use of cleaner environment-friendly production technologies.

An international conference on global solidarity for the protection of Africa and the Mediterranean from the impacts of climate change was held in Tunisia from 18 to 20 November 2007. It concluded with the adoption of a declaration and plan of action contributing to international and regional efforts to address the challenges of climate change and to activate the international cooperation mechanisms.

The Arab States call upon the developed countries to be more committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, because of their direct historical and current responsibility for climate change. They call for the inclusion in a post-2012 agreement of the identification of quantified commitments by developed countries and emphasize that policies and measures to fulfil those commitments should not adversely affect sustainable development in developing countries.

The Arab Group calls for a strengthening of partnerships among Governments, civil society and the private sector in addressing climate change, complementing international and bilateral cooperation but not replacing it. The Group stresses the need to hold the upcoming rounds of negotiations under the Bali Action Plan and Road Map at one of the United Nations headquarters in order to ensure the widest possible participation by Member States.

The Arab Group believes that the annex I parties should be committed to reducing emissions after 2012, bearing in mind that developing countries, including the Arab States, are still in the development phase and are in need of cleaner fossil energy with improved efficiency and of clean energy technology so that they can achieve progress and sustainable development, and that their first priority is still poverty eradication.

The Arab States call for the transfer to developing countries of clean technologies, including technologies for clean fuel production and for carbon dioxide capture and storage; the development of clean development projects; and the establishment of research and study centres for climate change in developing countries, including the Arab States, to study the impacts and challenges that their peoples face as a result of that phenomenon.

Finally, I would like to inform the Assembly that the Council of Arab Environmental Affairs Ministers, at its nineteenth meeting, held at the headquarters of the League of Arab States on 5 and 6 December 2007, adopted an Arab ministerial declaration on climate change, which constitutes the basis for future action and reflects the Arab point of view in dealing with climate change issues.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu, the Permanent Representative of Tonga.

Mrs. 'Utoikamanu (Tonga): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific Islands Forum, namely Fiji, Nauru, Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, the Kingdom of Tonga. Let me say at the outset that we associate ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/644) and applaud him and the President of the General Assembly for their collective leadership and efforts to position and maintain the prominence of climate change on the United Nations agenda. The range of issues and stakeholders identified in the report of the Secretary-General confirms its enormity and complexity and highlights the need to streamline, realign, integrate and harmonize agencies, functions and budgetary support in order to maximize the benefits from the utilization of the limited resources available.

The bringing together and forging of extensive partnerships between Government and the private sector to bring about and execute the requisite transformation and improvement in production and in the development and deployment of the necessary technologies and financial resources is also valid. That is particularly true in developed countries, since partnerships with the private sector in Pacific small island developing States are limited due to diseconomies of scale. That is particularly important, as we have embarked on the implementation of the Bali Road Map and the involvement of the United Nations and its agencies as the primary vehicles in facilitating action against climate change. Its support in the negotiations process is therefore crucial.

It is equally important to emphasize again that the time for action is now. We must not delay or defer action until the negotiations are completed. There is much work that can be done on the ground, particularly in the most vulnerable countries, which are the least equipped to face climate change.

The Pacific island countries are already experiencing climate change and its impacts, and the outlook for the future is grim. Our leaders have reiterated their deep concern over the serious and growing threat posed by climate change to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Pacific island countries and their communities, peoples and cultures. We consider the issue of climate change to be one of security since it has an impact on basic human security needs, including in the economic, food, health, environment and personal and community security areas. It was in this vein that, last year, our group participated in the Security Council's debate on energy, security and climate change (see S/PV.5663).

Our leaders have further agreed that national action plans for climate change should be developed and implemented and that climate change should be mainstreamed into national development planning. There is a clear linkage between climate change and the achievement of international frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. The Pacific plan thus provides a solid platform for regional cooperation, guiding collective positions through the Commission on Sustainable Development and other international forums that advocate the special case of small island States.

In this regard, we are also of the view that the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should be strengthened as a New York focal point for climate change so that the Pacific small island developing States do not have to wait for the day devoted to such States during the

Commission on Sustainable Development session to address the Barbados Programme of Action.

Our leaders welcomed the indication by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that it is physically and economically feasible to mitigate climate change and that, with concerted international support, adaptation can succeed. Conversely, without serious action, the global economy and the fragile resources of the Pacific will be severely affected.

Our regional agencies have been directed to intensify joint programming with the aim of advancing the implementation of regional frameworks and action plans, in particular the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action. These are aimed at better assisting members with developing adaptation measures in response to the effects of climate change; facilitating the collection and analysis of scientific, social and economic information and traditional knowledge in a manner that will allow for appropriate and informed decision-making by members; and identifying sustainable financing options at the national, subregional and regional levels to support climate change adaptation and mitigation by members.

Five of the Pacific small island developing States are also least developed countries and have benefited from preparing their National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). At the Bali Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, many of our countries called for the extension of this type of support activity to all small island developing States.

This is a step that the United Nations system can implement without delay. All that is required is some technical and financial support. We have a network of expertise in the Pacific, including through our regional intergovernmental agencies, which are ready and willing to assist should a decision on the extension of NAPAs be taken. There will also be a need to support the implementation of projects identified by existing and future NAPAs.

Another area where the United Nations system can assist is to implement actions in support of the Global Environment Facility Capacity Development Initiative. While this is of relevance to all multilateral environment agreements, it is of particular importance in the area of climate change. The work that has been undertaken so far has been limited to national capacity self-assessments. We now need to progress to the vital phase of actual implementation.

Although the Pacific small island developing States have limited greenhouse gas emissions, we nevertheless are implementing a regional project to remove barriers to renewable energy. We estimate that this project will reduce our fossil fuel emissions by 33 per cent from the business-as-usual scenario by 2015. In real terms, this is only the equivalent of 2 million tons of carbon dioxide, but we have made a commitment to renewable energy in the region and we are making this contribution. We see an important supporting role from the United Nations system in ensuring that our project plans actually succeed in reducing greenhouse gases.

The Bali Road Map concluded that any new climate change regime would need to include reduced emissions from deforestation in developing countries. However, there is a need to develop appropriate monitoring guidelines as well as capacity at the local level to reduce deforestation. As we negotiate the Road Map, there is scope for a coordinated United Nations system effort to assist the relevant countries in establishing preparedness to implement projects to reduce deforestation.

In conclusion, the United Nations and the global community have this opportunity to have an impact on what the Secretary-General has noted as the defining issue of our era, and that is climate change. Let us truly make a difference and follow through on our commitments with concrete actions.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Barbados, His Excellency Mr. Christopher Hackett.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM associates itself with the statements made by Ambassador Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the statement to be made shortly by the Ambassador Friday of Grenada, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States.

CARICOM wishes to convey its appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this event and also to the Secretary-General for the

timely submission of his report on the United Nations activities in relation to climate change (A/62/644).

CARICOM welcomed the adoption of the Bali Road Map at Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007, including the Bali Action Plan, the operationalization of the Adaptation Fund and the decision taken by parties to the Kyoto Protocol to continue the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Protocol. Agreement on this comprehensive Road Map is an important first step, and we are cautiously optimistic that the Bali Conference represented a new beginning in our common effort to confront this global threat. The Secretary-General has said "there is the will, and the determination, at the highest level, to break with the past and act decisively" (A/62/511, annex II, para. 29). It is now our job to translate this will and determination into concrete and lasting results.

With this task comes the awesome responsibility of crafting a political response to the overwhelming scientific evidence that the future of humanity will be placed in greater jeopardy without urgent and ambitious global action to address climate change. The negotiations over the next two years will be extremely complex and challenging. However, CARICOM cannot emphasize enough the critical importance of a successful outcome to our very existence. We therefore urge all Member States to engage constructively and in good faith in the discussions and negotiations. Inaction or insufficient action, we believe, are unacceptable options for the smallest, poorest and most vulnerable members of our global society.

The inadequacy of financing for adaptation activities in developing countries is a major failing of the entire international system. As stated in the 2007 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme, the current framework provides the equivalent of an aid sponge for mopping up during a flood. That report estimates that new additional adaptation financing of at least $86 billion a year will be required by 2015 to meet the most basic and pressing adaptation needs of developing countries. Expressed in other terms, this figure represents a mere one tenth of what developed countries currently mobilize for military expenditure.

It is an unfortunate reality that CARICOM countries and small island developing States, together with the LDCs, all of which contribute the least to the problem, are confronted with the most serious challenges associated with climate change yet, at the same time, possess the least capacity for adaptation. Climate change of very damaging proportions and which poses a serious danger to the very existence of our countries is already occurring, and the longer the international community postpones the implementation of the necessary greenhouse gas emission cuts, the more adaptation will be required by small island developing States — and at much greater cost.

Negotiations around the four themes agreed to in Bali, namely, mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology, should not prevent advancement of or immediate action under any theme. For CARICOM, adaptation, finance and technology are not only required in 2009 or post-2012, they are also urgently needed now.

CARICOM member States have been forced to divert scarce resources from key developmental initiatives, such as those in health, education, food, provision of critical infrastructure, to climate change adaptation activities. Surely this has major implications for achieving sustainable development goals.

While increasing emphasis is being paid to private-public partnerships, the role of international cooperation remains essential and must be enhanced. CARICOM urges developed countries to take immediate action to significantly scale up the level of financing devoted to adaptation through the provision of new and additional resources, over and above traditional official development assistance. This would serve as a major confidence-building measure and demonstration of good faith, as we enter a period of great uncertainty.

The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system, by the very nature of their respective mandates, are important forums for dialogue, raising awareness and the exchange of information on issues of global concern. CARICOM believes that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council must continue to ensure that addressing climate change remains a global priority, while fully respecting but not duplicating, the ongoing negotiating process with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In this context, future actions or initiatives by the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council should add value to the ongoing negotiations and be guided by the needs of Member States, particularly those most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. While we are convinced that a parallel negotiating theatre should not be established within the General Assembly, we are equally convinced that the issue of climate change should not be held in abeyance in New York until our work is completed within the UNFCCC.

CARICOM has some concerns over the orientation of the report of the Secretary-General and, in particular, the rationale given for what he terms "[a]n inclusive and coherent approach to climate change". We believe that the first and overriding priority of the United Nations system's work on climate change should be addressing the needs of those most vulnerable and most adversely impacted by climate change — small island developing States, LDCs, countries in Africa and disaster-prone developing countries — rather than, as the report states, providing support for negotiations. The effectiveness of the United Nations system should be assessed by its capacity to deliver the required assistance to, and build capacity in, these vulnerable countries and other developing countries.

CARICOM member States are highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change including rising sea levels, increasingly severe hurricanes and other extreme weather events, drought and water scarcity, coral bleaching and declining fish stocks. In this regard, we call on relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to ensure that their activities in the area of climate change in our region are fully supportive of national and regional efforts to address these specific challenges.

This demand-driven approach with strong national and regional ownership must be embedded in the work of the United Nations at the national and regional levels. Areas, sectors, projects and programmes identified as having priority in our national communications to the Convention, national and regional adaptation plans and sustainable development plans and strategies should receive the full support of the relevant parts of the United Nations system.

Towards these ends, the international community, including the United Nations system should, we believe, first, assist CARICOM to incorporate climate change adaptation concerns in national development plans and strategies and provide the required resources to implement these plans and strategies. Secondly, it should provide technical and financial resources to assist CARICOM to strengthen national and regional climate change coordination mechanisms such as the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center. Thirdly, it should support cooperation for information-sharing on adaptation technologies, development and transfer between developing countries, including the dissemination of examples of climate-change-adaptation "best practices". Fourthly, it should provide technical and financial assistance to CARICOM in the areas of climate monitoring and modelling and support the further development of vulnerability assessments, climate scenarios and climate-impact studies in the region. Fifthly, it should provide technical and financial support in the areas of disaster preparedness, early warning, risk management, disaster mitigation and disaster recovery and rehabilitation. And, finally, it should develop new financial arrangements to provide adaptation measures and provide insurance to small island developing States to enable them to recoup losses due to the impact of climate change and rising sea levels.

In Bali, our main message was captured in the phrase "no island left behind". Post-Bali, we are hopeful that this short, yet simple message, remains at the forefront of all efforts by the international community to address climate change.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Grenada, Mr. Angus Friday.

Mr. Friday (Grenada): On behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, I have the honour of conveying to you, Sir, as President of the General Assembly, our sincere appreciation for your leadership on this critical issue of climate change. This issue and this leadership is manifested by the urgency given to the climate change agenda at this sixty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly.

We are very encouraged by the rapidity with which this thematic debate is being held following Bali. During this debate, we have been presented with a wide array of ideas with the participation of others

from outside of the United Nations family. They have enlightened us with some of their own perspectives on this matter.

Clearly, we at the United Nations do not have a monopoly on ideas and tackling the problem of climate change is not a task we will accomplish by ourselves. Opening the dialogue to others is one way of developing partnerships, and partnerships are essential if we are to work together to overcome this challenge of global warming.

Those who attended the eventful meeting in Bali may well agree that Bali was like a strong wind, blowing down old barriers so that new alliances and partnerships could be grown; groups which had previously stood apart began negotiating along common lines. Countries that had stood outside of the mainstream of the general consensus had the courage to join in. In a real sense, the spirit of partnership began in Bali, and we look forward to seeing this continue and thrive.

Speaking of partnerships, we welcome the operationalization of the adaptation fund, and we congratulate the Global Environment Facility on receiving the mandate to provide the service of managing that fund.

In bringing my opening remarks to a close, I would just like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all of us in AOSIS, to once again recognize the outstanding efforts and hospitality of the Government and people of Indonesia. Indeed, as we move forward on the Bali Road Map, we eagerly anticipate further successes in Poland and in Denmark.

Today, AOSIS would like to talk about partnerships for urgent action. As we rapidly approach the enhancement of the Kyoto Protocol post-2012, I must emphasize that we in the island States do not have the luxury of time. We are at the edge of a tipping point and time has run out. As you know, the small island developing States began to alert the world to the dangers of global warming some 20 years ago. So today I do not emphasize the fact that climate change is a critical existential issue for the island States, because we have said again and again that this is a matter of survival for us. There is no need for me to elaborate on the fact that our coastal zones are being rapidly eroded and that we are threatened by the increasing ferocity of hurricanes, which in the case of my own country have caused damage worth 200 per cent of our gross domestic product. It would be repetitive for me to talk about the salinization of our limited water resources and the encroaching desertification that threatens our agriculture and food security.

Today, AOSIS does not wish to elaborate on the disastrous impacts of climate change that we are now facing, because, quite frankly, there is a time for talking and there is a time for action. The time for action is now.

We must work as one to achieve the fundamental principle of protecting the most vulnerable among us, as mentioned by the Secretary-General, be they in the villages of low-lying countries such as Bangladesh and Guyana, in vulnerable atolls such as Tuvalu and the Maldives, in hurricane-prone areas such as Jamaica or Belize, or in countries facing greater desertification such as Cape Verde and many African countries.

We need to understand that no man is an island and no island must be left behind. That is the fundamental principle for which we are building partnerships and for which the United Nations and the world must work together: no island left behind.

Last year, we joined hands in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme in preparing for Bali. We also joined hands with the United Nations Foundation and the Friends on Climate Change in developing a round-table series that deals with the very immediate issue of how we can go about financing climate change. As a matter of fact, tomorrow we have the final installation of that process, which will be held at the Indian Mission. We will release a green paper on global islands green financing, which deals with the whole issue of financing for adaptation in low-lying coastal and island States. The details of proposed actions for working in partnership with others will be spelled out in that document, which will be released tomorrow.

Today, however, we are announcing further partnerships. In that regard, we warmly welcome the staunch support expressed by our fellow islanders in the Mediterranean. Greece has agreed to come on board as a cornerstone partner, with one million euros. In recognition of the immediate threats faced by all of us, this is a partnership for urgent action. It will support the members of AOSIS as we navigate our way from Bali all the way through to Copenhagen, it will help with information-sharing, and it will help to

mainstream our adaptation into the very core of our economic development.

That special account will be used as seed funding to promote and attract further partnerships and to develop tangible projects on the ground. We see it as a necessary adjunct to working synergistically with the Global Environment Facility, the adaptation fund and other multilateral, bilateral and private sources of funding.

We welcome this type of partnership and indeed the strong expressions of support that we have had from other countries, United Nations agencies, other United Nations partners, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, all of which are very much welcome, and we seek to strengthen them.

I think that here at the United Nations in New York, as a starting point, we can ask for the support of our partners in calling for the strengthening of the Small Island Developing States Unit. We certainly look forward to the review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

The United Nations and the world are working at addressing climate change, but much more work needs to be done. What we need is work, not talk. We at AOSIS do not have the luxury of time. We cannot wait for implementation, we cannot wait for action, and we cannot wait to adapt. We must do all of those things now. When we meet again, the tenor of our deliberations must be positive, it must inspire confidence. We must be talking about some of the success stories that we have achieved, because it is those success stories and indeed the confidence we have inspired that will help us to build partnerships. We certainly encourage others not so much to speak of the problems in the future — although we cannot run away from problems — but to emphasize the solutions. Indeed, as suggested yesterday by one speaker, the United Nations must now embark upon a systematic mechanism for monitoring implementation and sharing success stories.

In closing, I said that AOSIS has been at this for some 20 years. In 1988 and perhaps in 1998, we may have called for debates. But in 2008 we are calling for action, urgent action through partnerships to ensure that no island is left behind.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Martin Chungong Ayafor, representative of Cameroon.

Mr. Chungong Ayafor (Cameroon): It is an honour and a privilege to speak on behalf of the African Group in this debate on the theme "Addressing climate change: the United Nations and the world at work".

The African Group associates itself with the statement made this morning by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this event and for providing an informative background paper on the key issues of the subject under consideration. I also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report.

Climate change is a serious challenge and threat, due to its global nature. It is being discussed widely, in various forums. However, those debates and forums should not be allowed to undermine the ongoing consultations within the existing frameworks and instruments aimed at addressing this global challenge, namely the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. It is imperative that all initiatives aimed at addressing the impacts of climate change endeavour to bolster and strengthen those instruments.

Climate change is a reality that we cannot overlook. It affects all countries, but its impacts are most keenly felt in developing countries, particularly in African countries, where it is threatening efforts for poverty eradication, economic gains made in the recent past and sustainable development achievements.

In terms of impact, Africa is at the receiving end of climate variability and climate change, with all the consequences of a rise in the number of extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, cyclones and high winds, which have the capacity to damage national and subregional economies within the continent. Droughts have led to economic losses due to decreases in hydropower generation, while floods have caused widespread damage to infrastructure, thus disrupting food production and threatening food security.

We are all aware now that temperature rises have been accompanied by an increase in vector-borne diseases such as highland malaria, typhoid, cholera and Rift Valley fever. Similarly, as a result of global warming, glaciers on Mount Kenya and Mount Kilimanjaro, for instance, are fast melting. That, in effect, has a very negative impact on the people around those regions.

Individual countries are undertaking several initiatives to improve our understanding of how adaptation can be achieved and in particular how our adaptive capacity can best be enhanced.

Recent concerted efforts by African countries to tackle their common concerns are many. The declaration and action plan adopted by the International Solidarity Conference on Climate Change Strategies for the African and Mediterranean Regions, an event held in Tunis from 18 to 20 November 2007, sought to contribute to the international effort addressing climate change challenges and to enhance international and regional cooperation and solidarity. It aims at enabling the countries of the region to implement their national climate change adaptation plans and strategies. In addition, the Tunis declaration was endorsed a few days ago in Addis Ababa by the Tenth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union. Those initiatives are a testimony of the commitment to fighting climate change.

Although African countries are in a small way addressing the impact of climate change, their efforts will not be very effective without international support. It is on the basis of the foregoing that the more the international community delays in initiating and supporting adaptation activities in the vulnerable countries, the more costly it is going to be in the future. We believe that the debate on climate change should now concentrate on actions.

In relation to financing, the African Group wishes to observe that adaptation to the impacts of climate change is the key to poverty eradication and sustainable development. Assisting developing countries, particularly the poor and the most vulnerable countries, in coping with their adaptation needs that are due to the impacts of climate change is an obligation under the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol and must be undertaken in an urgent and sustainable manner.

A recent assessment of adaptation funds suggests that tens of billions of dollars will be required each year. However, thus far, only a few hundred million dollars are available from voluntary funding sources. They are the Least Developed Countries Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund, and the Global Environment Facility small grants and bilaterals. It is therefore obvious that a huge gap exists between adaptation funding needs and the actual funding available. That huge gap needs to be dealt with in earnest. It is imperative that the Adaptation Fund be funded adequately and expeditiously.

Achieving equitable distribution of clean development mechanism projects and addressing the need for financial resources to support these activities have been recognized as having priority. We wish to note that clean development mechanisms have the potential to play an important role for the sustainable development and poverty alleviation of sub-Saharan Africa.

We must emph size that, while we underscore the fact that only a global solution can solve the global problem of climate change, this solution must be consistent with our sustainable development priorities, poverty reduction and our right to grow our economies.

As regards the post-2012 climate regime, we believe that an ambitious comprehensive agreement, negotiated within the UNFCCC and building on the Kyoto Protocol, must be our focus and should, as agreed at Bali, be achieved no later than 2009. To that end, we call on the international community to fast-track and support the processes and outcomes of the Bali Conference, particularly the Bali Road Map.

Mitigation and adaptation cannot be achieved without appropriate technology. It is our hope that the ongoing United Nations efforts and the discussions on the Bali Road Map will be given priority.

The UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol provide a sound basis for multilateral global action. Although some progress has been made and is being made in the implementation of those instruments, these actions are far from adequate, primarily because of the limited scope of the commitments by developed country parties and inadequate implementation of those commitments.

Finally, we would also wish to caution on a current trend towards amplifying climate change while at the same time shelving the threat of poverty and the need to make headway on the internationally agreed

development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Yu Qingtai, Special Representative for Climate Change Talks of China.

Mr. Yu Qingtai (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The issue of climate change remains a serious challenge in today's world. It affects not only the development of the global economy and prosperity, but also the very existence of mankind. A united front for tackling this challenge and safeguarding the common home of mankind has become the common aspiration of all members of the international community.

The Bali Conference held last December was a turning point and a milestone in the process of negotiations over climate change. It marked the beginning of a new historic period of international cooperation in responding to the challenge. Its significance can be seen in the following aspects.

First, an agreement was eventually reached on the Bali Road Map, which provides direction to the efforts by the international community to tackle climate change. Secondly, the Conference in Bali contributed to the acceleration of negotiations by confirming and adhering to the twin-track negotiating process and by a clear-cut pronouncement on the mechanism and the timetable for the process.

Thirdly, the Bali Conference reaffirmed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol as the main channels for international response on climate change and reiterated the fundamental principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, thereby safeguarding the very foundation of international cooperation in this regard. Finally, the Conference guaranteed the comprehensiveness, integrity and effectiveness of international cooperation.

It must also be recognized, however, that the Bali Road Map only marks the beginning. The international community must continue with substantive consultations and negotiations in order to arrive at a final agreement on post-2012 international cooperation on climate change within the next two years. In that connection, I wish to emphasize the following three points.

First, the principles established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Protocol, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, represent the consensus of the international community and constitute the foundation for international cooperation to respond to climate change. Any framework for future arrangements must be firmly based on those principles.

Secondly, the four building blocks — namely, mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing — are all essential components in developing an effective framework to respond to climate change. As such, they should be given equal attention. None of them should be distorted or neglected. Issues of concern to developing countries, including that of the transfer of technology, should be given particular attention.

Thirdly, in accordance with the Bali Road Map, the international community should establish effective mechanisms as soon as possible in order to ensure that measurable, reportable and verifiable assistance is provided to developing countries with regard to financial resources, technology and capacity building, so as to promote the achievement of sustainable development in those countries.

As the most broad-based intergovernmental organization, the United Nations is rightly playing a positive role with respect to responding to climate change, in particular in the following areas.

First, with regard to political mobilization, the United Nations should make full use of the General Assembly and other relevant platforms to carry out dialogue on all major issues related to climate change, with the objective of raising awareness of this challenge and facilitating the achievement of sustainable development.

Secondly, with regard to promoting partnership, the United Nations should make full use of such channels as the Commission on Sustainable Development to encourage the establishment of partnerships between Governments, the business community, the academic community and non-governmental organizations, so as to encourage joint efforts in the area of climate change.

Thirdly, with regard to providing pragmatic support, the United Nations should utilize available new resources to increase financial flows and the transfer of technology in order to support developing countries in the formulation and implementation of their national climate change strategies.

China takes the issue of climate change very seriously. Within our capabilities, we have adopted a significant number of policies and measures to respond to the challenge posed by climate change. In the years to come, China will continue to shoulder its share of responsibility and make its own contribution in that regard. We will also help other developing countries to enhance their capacity to adapt to climate change. We are confident that, through the joint efforts of the entire international community, we will certainly succeed in overcoming the challenges of climate change and leave behind us a world characterized by harmonious, clean and sustainable development, for the benefit of future generations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Markku Niinioja, Special Representative for Climate Change and head of the delegation of Finland.

Mr. Niinioja (Finland): Finland associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

Climate change is now high on the political agenda. Based on the recent findings of scientists and the work of the International Panel on Climate Change, we now have a better understanding of how multifaceted this problem is and what needs to be done in the short and medium term to address it. Cooperation is the only solution. We need a common vision. The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali launched an inclusive negotiating process, which is to be concluded by December 2009 in Copenhagen with a new global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement. For the first time, it has been agreed that all nations must take part in reducing emissions. The contributions expected of countries at different stages of development need to reflect their capabilities.

The United Nations has a decisive role in the response to climate change. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary forum for future action. But the contribution of the entire United Nations system is required. Therefore, efforts towards greater coherence and coordination in the United Nations system will assist us in developing coherent, integrated and holistic responses. The report of the Secretary-General (A/62/644) demonstrates that the United Nations has already done much. But even greater efforts are required. United efforts, partnerships and cooperation between various stakeholders are needed. The new challenges resulting from the Bali Road Map call for strengthened international environmental governance. The United Nations should serve as the key forum, bringing together stakeholders from the private and public sectors, as well as civil society.

Let me now touch upon some issues of particular interest to Finland. Climate change has serious implications for international peace and security. Even if we are successful in our efforts to mitigate climate change and adapt to its consequences, the impact on ecosystems, agriculture, human health and — as we have already seen with rising sea levels in small island States — human security will have a profound effect on the international security environment. No country can tackle problems of this magnitude alone. Sound environmental policies need to become an essential part of conflict prevention on a global scale.

In that respect, Finland is pleased with the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Peacebuilding Commission, which will involve environmental advocacy at the political level in New York, as well as technical assistance to United Nations country teams in the pilot countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Development is another primary field of United Nations activity where climate change is currently one of the biggest threats. Climate change makes the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals more difficult. It is not only an environmental issue, it is also a sustainable development challenge. Integrating the climate issue into national development plans and poverty-reduction strategies is crucial.

Forests play an important role in sustainable development. However, deforestation and changes in land use are continuing at an alarming rate. It is estimated that some 20 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions result from deforestation in tropical forests. If we do not stop that development, the consequences can be grave. Sustainable forest

management in all countries can be crucial to reducing greenhouse gases, not only through the sink effect but also by providing a source for renewable energy and material substitution through harvested wood products.

I am pleased to note that the importance of forests is now widely recognized in the international climate policy debate. In Bali, we decided to make the reduction of emissions from deforestation in developing countries one of the building blocks of the future climate change regime. The contribution of various United Nations institutions and other stakeholders will be needed to cover this new element in climate discussions.

Lastly, Finland welcomes the emergence of the gender perspective in the climate change debate. Impoverished women's disadvantages — their limited access to resources, restricted rights, limited mobility and a muted voice in shaping decisions — make them highly vulnerable to climate change. However, women are not just helpless victims of climate change. They are also potentially powerful agents of change, through their knowledge and responsibilities in natural resources management.

This also relates to children, who are closely dependent on women. All aspects connected to climate change, not only mitigation and adaptation, but also policy development and decision-making, should include a gender perspective.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sergio Serra, Special Representative for Climate Change and head of the delegation of Brazil.

Mr. Serra (Brazil): First of all, let me say that Brazil associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I commend the President of the General Assembly for organizing this thematic debate. Along with eradicating poverty and combating hunger and disease, climate change is one of the most urgent challenges of our times. Historic emissions of carbon dioxide are its main cause; its consequences are already being observed. The poorest communities in developing countries are the most affected by, and the least able to cope with, a warming planet.

As a global challenge, climate change requires a global response. The responsibilities are common, but they are also differentiated. Brazil is committed, in accordance with the Bali Action Plan, to pursue "nationally appropriate" actions on mitigation of climate change that are "measurable, reportable and verifiable", according to our fair share and our respective capabilities.

Climate change has profound social, economic and environmental implications. Hence, the engagement of a vast array of stakeholders from civil society and the private sector should be praised and welcomed. This should not replace, however, the central role of States and international organizations.

The establishment of partnerships among different actors can help us reach a global low-carbon economy. One such partnership is the ethanol programme that Brazil has been developing since the 1970s as a substitute for petrol, involving the government and the private sector. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the main source of historic and current carbon dioxide emissions is the burning of fossil fuels. By extensively using ethanol, Brazil has avoided emitting 644 million tons from fossil fuel use in the past 30 years. It is an established fact that ethanol production from sugar cane reduces greenhouse gas emissions, does not affect the production of staple foods and is socially sustainable.

Despite this untapped potential, developed countries have erected all sorts of barriers to biofuels from developing countries while spending billions of euros and dollars in subsidies for inefficient producers. Such measures distort markets, raise energy prices, spread poverty, endanger food security and are inconsistent with climate concerns. It is time that the lofty talk about climate sustainability was matched with real action that effectively mitigates climate change.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol provide the appropriate forum for concerted action. When discussing future action, in spite of some allegations to the contrary, we are not looking at a new post-2012 regime; nor is there a Kyoto Protocol expiration date. The successful outcome of the Thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention, last December, which included the approval of the Bali Action Plan, reiterated the validity and importance of

the current climate change instruments and multilateral regime.

Debates and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations, its specialized agencies and its Member States can strengthen and support negotiations and actions under the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol. The recent General Assembly debate on climate change as a global challenge, as well as the high-level event convened by the Secretary-General last September, paved the road that led to a successful Bali meeting. Today's fruitful discussions are a part of this process and are providing valuable on for the ongoing negotiations under the UNFCCC.

The international community should concentrate efforts on implementing the Bali Action Plan. Mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology development and transfer are its four pillars. I would like to single out the issue of technology. We must act decisively to promote, facilitate and finance the transfer of and access to environmentally sound technologies and know-how, particularly from developed countries to developing countries, for both mitigation and adaptation. Innovative mechanisms for removal of barriers to the transfer and dissemination of these technologies to developing countries, including new and additional financing, are fundamental issues that should be discussed and agreed upon under the Bali Action Plan. This will enable developing countries to implement mitigation actions in line with their historical responsibilities and current capabilities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his comprehensive overview of the United Nations climate change activities (A/62/644). The report reiterates the intrinsic relationship between global warming and the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.

When discussing the different roles of relevant United Nations bodies in this matter, we should ensure that they act under the guidance of Member States, ensure national ownership, take into account UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol decisions and guide themselves by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. By adhering to these four criteria, the United Nations system can play an instrumental role in assisting our countries' efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Antonio García Revilla, Assistant Secretary for Multilateral Affairs and head of the delegation of Peru.

Mr. García Revilla (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru particularly welcomes the initiative to hold this high-level debate of the General Assembly to consider together United Nations activities in relation to climate change.

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We also wish to state our agreement with the views expressed yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Mexico on behalf of the facilitators on international environmental governance with regard to the pending tasks for the United Nations system in this field.

In this regard, I wish to stress something that my country considers to be central in the fight against climate change. The first measure required to reverse the present climate change trend is to urgently set even more ambitious goals for reductions in the levels of greenhouse gas emissions. We believe that developed countries should strengthen their leadership on this task, on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Developing countries too have taken on a vital commitment and role, because we are the most severely affected. The challenge is to ensure that our development efforts continue to be sustainable in the face of the challenge of climate change. Peru believes that mainstreaming mitigation and adaptation policies in the international development agenda is an essential contribution by the United Nations system.

Indeed, the United Nations system is in an advantageous position for promoting within the international cooperation agenda those initiatives that, with the requisite urgency, developing countries need in order to reduce the risks of disaster caused by extreme climatic phenomena and to achieve sustained and sustainable economic growth.

In the area of adaptation, integrated and sustained adaptation policies are required over a period of time, covering areas such as water resource management, agriculture, health, industry, human settlements and risk reduction. In this regard, sectoral adaptation plans would be implemented following an integrated

approach that would simultaneously emphasize the protection of the health of affected populations, their food security, improving their resiliency to extreme phenomena and protecting their economic infrastructure and their biodiversity. Furthermore, to know and assess the vulnerabilities of our countries to climate change requires the development of capacities and technologies that the system would be able to mobilize given its comparative advantages in the field of development cooperation.

We have seen the United Nations system's valuable efforts to follow a more integrated approach in its support for countries as they implement their national adaptation policies. However, we must stress once more that, despite these laudable efforts, financial resources are still meagre, in view of the magnitude of the problem. We urgently need new and additional resources to start comprehensive initiatives. Let us not forget that, as mentioned during yesterday's panel discussion, and under the Convention itself, compliance with the developing countries' commitments depends on developed countries truly meeting their commitments related to financial resources and technology transfers.

In the area of mitigation, we need to promote low-carbon economic growth that will allow us to meet our development priorities, in particular the eradication of poverty, which afflicts a large part of our population. Developing such an economy requires that our countries adopt and implement environmentally sustainable growth strategies, which requires financial cooperation and better access to appropriate technologies. The development of clean and sustainable technologies, and their dissemination through international cooperation are crucial to a long-term greenhouse gas reduction strategy. United Nations agencies, programmes and funds are able to support the dissemination of the best technologies to counter greenhouse gas emissions for use in the system's projects in support of our national efforts. In that way, they contribute to fighting greenhouse gas emissions and to technology transfer, which is needed if we are to be more efficient. Despite that, we consider that we need to reflect on the development of the United Nations system's management in the energy field.

Finally, as was pointed out at the Earth Summit in 1992, we must consider that unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are being proposed as models to developing countries. These models are increasingly incompatible, as I have said, with preserving life on our planet in the medium and long term, in particular with respect to the increase in greenhouse gases, as noted in the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Finally, Peru believes that the United Nations system has a fundamental role to play with a view to actively promoting the attainment of the goals of the Convention. Each part of the system, in its own area of competence, can assist with climate change mitigation and adaptation policies upon the request of countries.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alejandro Wolff, representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): The United States commends the Secretariat for its work in highlighting the importance of building and strengthening partnerships to address the global challenge of climate change and appreciates the Secretary-General's report offering an overview of relevant United Nations activities (A/62/644).

A global solution to confronting climate change will require that we all collaborate on scientific and technological research, partner with industry on innovative energy efficiency and clean energy projects, and cooperate to finance mitigation and adaptation measures.

The United States supports the outcome at Bali and is strongly committed to achieving the goals of the Bali Road Map and reaching an agreement in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2009. Furthermore, the United States will continue to commit significant effort and resources to build and strengthen its partnerships to address this global challenge, including through an international funding mechanism to promote clean technologies. We are working hard to foster public-private investments and innovative clean energy technologies through multilateral initiatives, including the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, the Methane to Markets Partnership and the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum, among many others.

In his state of the union address last month, President Bush expressed his desire to reach an international agreement that will slow, stop and eventually reverse the growth of greenhouse gases, and he pointed out that such an agreement can accomplish

this only if it includes commitments by every major economy.

Late last month, the United States convened the second meeting of the world's major economies. This process is meant to support agreement under the Framework Convention and will consider a long-term goal for reducing greenhouse gases, near- to mid-term national emissions road maps and commitments, technology collaborations, sectoral efforts and financing. Participants found that meeting constructive. We look forward to additional meetings, to be hosted by our colleagues from France and Japan, and to a meeting of leaders of the major economies on this important issue this year.

The United States is taking action to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. In December, President Bush signed the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. Taken together, the new mandates for motor vehicles, alternative fuels, lighting, appliances and buildings could reduce projected greenhouse gas emissions by more than 6 billion metric tons by 2030. In March, the United States will host the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference, where Government officials and industry leaders from around the world will unite to confront the most pressing issues facing renewable energy development and deployment.

Partnerships and actions to address climate change are taking shape in cities and states across the United States, in communities large and small, as well as among business groups and our centres of research and learning. The United States is partnering with other countries to promote the development of advanced energy technologies that will help protect the global environment while enabling economic growth. Through the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, for instance, we are expanding investment and trade in cleaner energy technologies in countries representing about half of the global population, economic output, greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.

The United States has made significant investment in the research, development and deployment of new technologies. Since 2001, the United States has invested nearly $18 billion in research and development of cleaner, lower carbon and more efficient technologies, and will provide more than $36 billon in loan guarantees over the next two years, as well as other measures, to help accelerate their deployment.

Proving low-carbon coal technology on the shortest possible timeline is among the most important challenges we face if we are to reduce global emissions. In the United States, we are making the investment necessary to prove these technologies. President Bush's fiscal year 2009 budget for research, development and demonstration of advanced clean coal technology, when combined with required private-sector contributions, will approach a total investment of nearly $1 billion. It is the largest single budget request for advanced coal technology by a President in over 25 years. In addition to this year's budget request, the United States Government is providing $8 billion in loan guarantees for advanced coal projects, along with nearly $2 billion in tax credits.

At the September Major Economies Meeting, President Bush called for a new international clean technology fund to help developing nations harness the power of clean energy technologies. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda of Japan and Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom have also risen to the challenge, and our Governments are working together in establishing a new fund to be administered at the World Bank. The multilateral clean technology fund will stimulate and leverage private sector investment in clean technology in developing countries as those countries fulfil their commitments with respect to limiting greenhouse gas emissions. The President has committed to provide $2 billion to the fund over the next three years, and we urge other potential donors to join our effort.

We also need to remove the obstacles to the global use of the most advanced clean energy technologies. In November of last year, the United States and the European Union jointly submitted a ground-breaking proposal at the World Trade Organization to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers for environmental goods and services, with priority action on technologies directly linked to addressing climate change and energy security. Removing these barriers provides a tremendous opportunity to make a real impact on global emissions.

With regard to the Secretary-General's overview of United Nations activities, the United States commends the Organization on its efforts to improve and enhance collaboration and coordination on climate

change across all its agencies in order to maximize effectiveness. We enthusiastically support the organizational commitment to reduce carbon emissions through conservation and efficient management of resources across all agencies. We believe that the United Nations campaign to reduce its carbon footprint can contribute to making the United Nations an overall more efficient Organization, and can have beneficial environmental impacts as well, just as the United States federal Government's programme seeks to do.

But while carbon neutrality is a laudable long-term goal, we believe that United Nations agencies should explore the use of extrabudgetary funds, rather than regular budgetary funds, should they decide to purchase carbon credits, as that would avoid the diversion of precious resources from the core functions of United Nations agencies. The United States commends the United Nations for its vision to build partnerships across the world to tackle the challenge posed by a changing climate. We are committed to doing our part to contribute to this global effort.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hjálmar Hannesson, Permanent Representative of Iceland.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): We would like to thank the President for convening this thematic debate on one of the major concerns of humankind today. Last September, world leaders sent an unambiguous political message to delegations to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, guiding them to ambitiously seek common ground to deal with the threats caused by global warming. The Bali Action Plan — with its four equally important building blocks, namely, mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing — must lead to a comprehensive global agreement in December 2009 in Copenhagen.

The difference in views on approaches to the threat of worldwide climate disturbances is understandable. It reflects gaps in social conditions and industrial development between the wealthiest and the poorest nations. The most vulnerable, including small island developing States and least developed countries, which will be the hardest hit, are the least responsible for causing climate change. We must accept the fact that securing a safe future for humankind is the common responsibility of all nations. It is obvious that the economic costs of doing so must be shared according to means.

It is important to note, as others have done, that the financing of climate change adaptation and investments in mitigation technologies cannot, and must not, in any way undermine development cooperation aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

We welcome the initiatives of groups of world leaders, such as the Group of Eight and the Major Economies Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change. Their efforts are a valuable contribution towards a common binding United Nations agreement. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the only viable forum, for both reaching and enforcing worldwide consensus on actions to address climate change in a comprehensive way. The General Assembly, however, is an appropriate forum for giving political guidance, as this thematic debate should demonstrate.

The role of United Nations institutions in supporting and financing necessary action is vital. The World Bank and the International Finance Corporation are instrumental in bringing about and supporting partnership actions worldwide, and are helpful in designing and implementing innovative financing mechanisms.

The transfer of technology is one of the crucial elements in addressing climate change. Governments should facilitate investments by the private sector in new clean energy technology in developing countries and countries in transition, especially by enacting legislation providing security of investments and by avoiding burdening new technologies with undue taxation. By encouraging the private sector to invest in clean energy technologies in developing countries, a whole new world of opportunities for future technological innovation may be opened up. It is estimated that by the year 2030 up to $7 trillion dollars worth of clean energy investments may have been made, paving the way for a carbon-neutral future. It is unquestionably the role of the United Nations to ensure that this new industrial revolution does not bypass those countries where new investments and technological know-how are most needed.

Currently, over 80 per cent of all primary energy used in Iceland is renewable, which is the highest ratio of renewable energy use in the entire world. Iceland is proud to be at the forefront of developing the most advanced technology to harvest one of the cleanest and

safest renewable energy resources in the world: geothermal power is potentially accessible in some way in over 90 countries of the world. It is estimated that new geothermal power projects could increase installed capacity by 50 per cent or more in the next five years worldwide, as the number of countries with geothermal power operations will double to over 40.

For almost 30 years the Icelandic Government has operated and funded the United Nations Geothermal Training Programme, training hundreds of young professionals, both men and women, from 40 developing countries. These professionals have gone on to become instrumental in building geothermal energy projects in their home countries. This is one kind of technological transfer that we believe is helpful and which should be expanded in the years to come.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Socorro Rovirosa, head of the delegation of Mexico.

Ms. Rovirosa (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Mexico welcomes the President's initiative to convene this meeting, which provides us an opportunity to underscore the importance of collective efforts to address climate change and its effects.

The findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are conclusive and sound. We have experienced increasingly severe meteorological events and tremendous suffering caused to entire peoples — something that Mexico has not been immune to. The adoption of the Bali Road Map last December was in itself a major achievement that demonstrated that, despite our differences, there is a belief that the international community should move ahead together under the leadership of the United Nations to develop mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financing strategies to enable countries to effectively address climate change.

States have a fundamental responsibility in this area, but others also have a duty to act. Given their nature, partnerships involving the public and private sectors, national and international organizations, members of parliaments, governmental and non-governmental organizations, the scientific community, the media and civil society are crucial to the success of any policy.

Mexico attaches high priority to this issue. We are resolutely committed to adopting measures to combat climate change. In the interests of time, I shall refer only to some of the efforts we have made at the national level owing to our belief that inaction by some should not be an excuse to justify our own inaction.

We have stepped up our mitigation policies through our national climate change strategy. We are preparing a special programme, which includes a national study, in order to identify the economic implications of climate change and adaptation and mitigation measures. The goal is to ensure the resources necessary to implement our efforts. We also have in place a voluntary scheme of corporate emissions reporting, a first in the developing world. In 2007, we achieved our goal of planting 250 million trees in our country. That represents a quarter of the world's target. This year, we will plant an additional 280 million trees.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol are at the heart of Mexico's efforts at the international level. We were the first developing country to submit three national communications. We are now preparing the fourth, which will include updated emissions inventories.

Perhaps the greatest challenge we face is to be sufficiently creative, without departing from the principles and rationale of the Framework Convention, in finding new ways to respond to new scientific evidence and to address the clearly insufficient results achieved to date. In that endeavour, we must at all costs avoid creating a new North-South divide, with its walls of misunderstanding and mistrust.

One of the main problems in developing national policies is their high financial cost. Like many other countries, Mexico needs the support of international financial mechanisms that make it possible to develop technical and institutional capacities. Despite the fact that the transfer of technology and financing have been acknowledged to be key elements of any strategy to combat global warming, States in a position to help with such transfers have paid much less attention to the matter than is necessary.

Confronting climate change is economically and technologically viable. Clean technologies exist, and if the developing world had access to them, it would be able to make great strides in the areas of mitigation and adaptation. Access to technology is not, and should not

be, interpreted as lifting restrictions on intellectual property rights. That only serves to generate division on a subject of major importance. Mexico believes that addressing climate change entails joint creative work that recognizes the rights of those who develop technology while making it possible for developing countries to access, adapt and utilize that technology.

Access to sources of financing should make it possible for developing countries to participate further in efforts to combat climate change. We must develop new and innovative mechanisms that go beyond the traditional parameters of official development assistance. Mexico has called for the establishment of what it believes is a necessary multinational fund, with clear and inclusive formulas for contributions, to help overcome the fragmentation and inefficiency of existing funds. We note with interest that several other countries have also promoted the establishment of funds having different characteristics and similar goals. We express our willingness to work with them in order to expand access to financial resources for all States.

My Government is working on a proposal for the future fund that would make it possible to ensure the reliability of contributions to the fund while also ensuring that countries can benefit from its resources as they meet their national goals in accordance with their capabilities. In that regard, I should like to underscore the importance of the tenth special session of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, which, among other things, will take up the issue of mobilizing resources to address the challenges posed by climate change.

Under the aegis of the Bali Action Plan, we will soon begin negotiations for a new climate regime, which should be balanced, fair, all-inclusive and in line with developing countries' need for growth. We believe that the regime should include sectoral options, intensity indicators and international cooperation mechanisms that provide incentives to complement, rather than replace, the national efforts of developing countries.

At the same time, the United Nations is also responsible for making progress in strengthening the international environmental governance system and for enhancing the efficiency and coherence of the systems responses to the challenges of protecting the environment. We support the process of informal General Assembly consultations on United Nations environmental activities and the prompt adoption of agreements on this matter.

Mexico is ready to work in a responsible and constructive way in the negotiations that lie ahead.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.